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Managing knowledge in dispersed R&D settings

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ENGLISH SUMMARY

For globally dispersed R&D organizations, locally created knowledge offers unique and valuable insights that help create new technologies and potentially improve organizational learning throughout the organization. A challenge for such organizations lies in stimulating the creation of such locally embedded knowledge, while also managing to implement that specific knowledge more universally into the larger organization.

How does management meet the challenge of creating embedded local knowledge while at the same time making such knowledge less local and more universal for the organization? How do engineers on the work floor cope with dispersed local knowledge? How do they work in geographically dispersed R&D projects? What formal and informal ways of collaborating do they engage in? These questions are addressed through four empirical studies on managing knowledge in dispersed R&D settings.

Taking into account a practice perspective on knowledge, and drawing on organization studies and information management literature, the studies in this dissertation follow an in-depth exploratory and qualitative approach. The analysis and findings of the research shed light on the challenges organizations face in managing knowledge in dispersed R&D settings, such as dually managing specialization and integration of local knowledge, and provide several theoretical and practical insights into coping strategies for management.